WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1   1.   A method of recognizing handwriting, comprising:

2   obtaining a sample of handwriting;

3   segmenting said sample into separate handwritten

4 words; and

5   attempting to recognize a whole handwritten word

6 without attempting to recognize any individual letter of

7 the whole handwritten word.

1   2.   A method as in claim 1, wherein said recognizing

2 comprises determining a silhouette of the word, and

3 matching said silhouette to one of a plurality of reference

4 silhouettes.

1   3. A method as in claim 2, been said recognizing

2 comprises determining features of the silhouette.

1   4.   A method as in claim 3, wherein said features of

2 the silhouette includes high-profile features, and low

3 profile features, and locations of said high-profile

4 features and said low-profile features.

1   5.   A method as in claim 3, wherein said determining

2   features comprises determining prime features.

1   6.   A method as in claim 5, further comprising super

2   enclosing said prime features to form hybrid features.

1   7.   A method as in claim 6, further comprising

2   sorting said features by first syllable blends.

1   8.   A method as in claim 1, wherein said attempting

2   comprises categorizing said whole hidden handwritten word

3   according to its overall silhouette.

1   9.   A method as in claim 8, wherein said categorizing

2   comprises categorizing positions of features in said

3   handwritten word, and categorizing first syllable blends of

4   said handwritten word.

1   10. A method as in claim 1, wherein said sample of

2   handwriting includes family names.

1   11. A method as in claim 10, further comprising

2   forming a list of a plurality of family names, and forming

3   silhouette information about said plurality of family

4   names, and comparing said separate handwritten words to

5   said plurality of family names.

1   12.   A method as in claim 11, wherein said comparing

2   comprises forming silhouette information, and comparing

3   said silhouette information into said silhouette

4   information about said plurality of family names.

1   13.   A method as in claim 12, wherein said silhouette

2   information includes information about the presence of high

3   and low parts in the written word and the position of those

4   high and low parts.

1   14.   A method as in claim 12 wherein said silhouette

2   information includes first syllable blends in the word.

1   15.   A method, comprising:

2   analyzing a sample of handwriting by analyzing a whole

3   word of said sample at any one time, said analyzing

4   comprising forming information indicative of a silhouette

5   of said whole word, and comparing said information with a

6   database of information about other silhouettes.

1 16. A method as in claim 15, wherein said database of

2 information comprises a database of information obtained

3 from a list of possible words.

1 17. A method as in claim 16 wherein said words are

2 family names, and said list of possible words is a

3 telephone book.

1 18. A method as in claim 15, wherein said silhouette

2 information includes information indicative of high parts

3 in the word and low parts in the word, and positions of

4 said high parts and low parts in the word.

1 19. A method as in claim 15, wherein said silhouette

2 information includes information about first syllable

3 blends in the word.

1 20. A method as in claim 18, wherein said silhouette

2 information also includes information about first syllable

3 blends in the word.

1 21. A method as in claim 15, wherein said silhouette

2 information includes prime profiles indicative of specified

3   features, and concatenated profiles indicative of

4   combinations at specified features.

1   22.   A method as in claim 18, wherein each of a

2   plurality of silhouette information's is provided with a

3   number.

1   23.   A method as in claim 18, wherein each feature is

2   assigned a number.